

THE BEST CHRISTMAS FARE NO. 2340

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"
Psalm 119:103*

THIS is a time of feasting and we may as well have our feast as other people have theirs. Let us see whether there is not something for our spiritual palate, something to satisfy our spiritual appetite, that we may eat, and be content, and rejoice before the Lord.

Do you not think that two of the words in our text are very strange? If you had written them, would you not have said, "How sweet are thy words unto my *ear*?" The psalmist says, "How sweet are thy words unto my *palate*!" for that is the word in the margin. He did not write, "Yea, sweeter than honey to my *hearing*!" but "sweeter than honey to my *mouth*!"

Are words, then, things that we can taste and eat? No, not if they are the words of man—it would take many of our words to fill a hungry belly. "Be ye warmed and filled." It would take many tons of that sort of fodder to feed "a brother or sister destitute of daily food," for man's words are air and airy, light and frothy. They often deceive, they mock, they awaken hopes which are never realized. But God's words are full of substance—they are spirit, they are life, they are to be fed upon by the spiritually hungry.

Marvel not that I say this to you. It was God's word that made us—is it any wonder that His word should sustain us? If His word gives life, do you wonder that His word should also give food for that life? Marvel not, for it is written—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

God's words are meat, and drink, and food—and if bodies live not upon words—souls and spirits feed upon the words of God, and so are satisfied and full of delight. This is the language of an eater as well as of a hearer—of one who heard the words and then ate the words. The expression is oriental, but we are not quite strangers to it, even in our western talk, for we say, "They seem to eat the man's words," that is, when the hearers are very attentive to them, when they enjoy them, when the preacher's words seem to comfort them, and to minister sustenance to their mind and to their spirit.

I like this way of describing the reception of God's word as a matter of eating, for a man cannot eat God's word without living. He that takes it into himself must live thereby. There is a reality about the faith which eats. There is a something there most sure, which contains the elements of salvation, for tasting is a spiritual sense which implies nearness.

You can hear at a great distance by means of the telephone, but somehow, I do not think that anyone will invent an electrical taster. Nobody knows what may be done, but I fancy that I shall never be able to eat anything in New York. I think that we shall hardly ever reach such a triumph of science as that. There will always have to be a measure of nearness if we are to taste anything and so it is with God's word.

If we hear it, it is music in the ears, but still it may seem to be at a distance from us. We may not get a grip and grasp of it—but if we taste it—that means that we really have it here within ourselves. Then has it come very near to us and we enter into fellowship with the God who gave it.

This idea of tasting God's word contains the thought of receptiveness. A man may hear a thing, and as we say, it goes in one ear and out at the other, and so it does often, but that which a man gets into his mouth till he tastes it, and it is sweet to his palate, well, he has truly received that. If it is sweet to him, he will not do as they who have something lukewarm, which is objectionable, which they cast away out of their mouth. But when he finds it palatable, the sweetness will make him keep it where it is till he swallows it down into his inward parts. So I love this thought of tasting God's word because it implies nearness, an actual reception, and a veritable holding-fast of that which is so appreciated by the taste.

Tasting is also a personal matter. "Friends, Romans, countrymen," said Mark Anthony, in his oration over the body of Caesar, "lend me your ears." And they go to be lent and numbers of people hear for others. But tasting, surely, is a personal business—there is no possibility of my eating for you. If you choose to starve yourself by a long fast of fifty days, so you must. If I were to sit down and industriously attempt to eat your portion of food, and my own, too, it would not help you in the least.

You must eat for yourselves and there is no knowing the value of God's word till you eat it for yourself. You must personally believe it, personally trust to it, personally receive it into your innermost spirit, or else you cannot know anything about its power to bless and to sustain. I do pray, dear friends, that we may every one of us, tonight, understand what the psalmist meant when he spoke of tasting God's words and of finding them sweeter than honey to his mouth.

I. First, tonight, I call your attention to AN EXCLAMATION.

The text contains two notes of exclamation or admiration—"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" I cannot throw the notes of admiration and exclamation into my speech, as I would like to do, but this verse is evidently the utterance of one who is somewhat surprised and amazed, one who has a thought which he cannot adequately express. The thought is also one that gives much delight to the writer, for he exclaims, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

Now, I believe that it is a matter of wonder to many to find *the Gospel so sweet when the soul first tastes it*. Until I believed in Christ, I could not have imagined that a man was capable of so much delight as I then experienced. When I first looked to Christ and was lightened, the ease I felt when my burden rolled from off my shoulders quite astonished me. It seemed to me as if a man could never know such rest as I then enjoyed.

When I beheld my sin all put away through Christ's atoning blood, and knew myself to be "accepted in the beloved," I could have said, with the queen of Sheba, "Behold, the half was not told me." I had heard my father and other Christian men say that blessed are the people who trust in the Lord, but I never thought there really was such blessedness as I found. I fancied that they would decoy me with some sweet declarations of what, after all, might be very commonplace, but I did not find it to be so.

And I am here to bear my witness that when I believed God's promise, I was so amazed and overpowered with joy that, even now, I cannot tell you the delight I felt, ay, and still do feel, in the word of a faithful God to all who trust in Jesus Christ, His Son.

This, then, may be the exclamation of a soul tasting the Gospel for the first time, but it may also be the exclamation of a soul cheered by still tasting the Gospel—"How sweet are thy words unto my taste!" "I have known the Lord," says one, "these forty years." Another says, "I have known Christ these thirty years, but He is as precious to me as ever He was, His word is as fresh and novel as if I had never heard it, before and His promise comes to my soul with as much of life and power as if He had only spoken it yesterday and I had never heard it till this moment."

Are you not surprised, sometimes, you who are getting into middle life, or even verging on old age, to find how sweet God's word still is to you? And if, perhaps, you have been away from the house of God traveling in foreign lands, or you have been laid aside by sickness, or if, perchance, you are a preacher and do not often hear a sermon, is it not a very delightful thing to sit in your pew, and when you are hearing the Gospel, to say, "Oh, it is sweet! It is coming home to me now"?

I heard a sermon some years ago—I do not often get the opportunity of hearing—and when my tears began to flow under a simple statement of the Gospel, I said to my self “Yes, I am not a mere dealer in it, who hands it out to others, for I relish the flavor of it myself.” Why, I have had to stand here, sometimes, like the butchers at Christmas time, cutting and chopping off joints of meat for you all, and I have not had even a snack myself all the while.

But when I get the opportunity of sitting down at the table and listening, it may be, to a poor, humble preacher talking about Christ, I seem to set my knife and fork to work and I say, “Yes, that is just the very food for me, give me some more of it. My soul can feed upon such fare as that.” And I have felt glad, with an inward and unspeakable delight, to find how sweet it was to my taste—“Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Rejoice, dear friends, if you find it so.

I reckon that this language of exclamation and admiration will also come from *the most advanced saint, increasing in knowledge of the Gospel*—the believer who has studied the Word of God most earnestly and who has had the deepest experience in it. Other books are soon done with, but the Bible is never fully understood.

I think that most readers will tell you that, the more they read, the fewer books become. Whereas, to the young, there is a whole library yet to go through. The man who has been a diligent and careful reader all his life finds only some few books that he now cares to read. He knows the rest—he could write the most of them—perhaps, could write them better than they are written. Now he keeps on striking out this one from the list and that other, for he has gone beyond them—and the book which charmed him when he was young ceases to have any value to him when he gets beyond it in his riper years. He has seen through its mistakes and now he yearns for something more accurate.

But it is never so with the words of God. It is never so with *the Word of God, the Incarnate Word, the Christ*. The more you know of Him, the more you wish to know. And the more you taste of Him, the sweeter He becomes till in heaven, the sweetness will be far more intense than it is now—and Christ will be more precious and more delightful to us through the eternal ages than He is at this present moment.

I believe that, in glory, the saints will often lift up their hands and say, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” When those words shall have been completely fulfilled, the very retrospect of the promise will charm our immortal spirits, till heaven shall become as a wood, like that of Jonathan, which dripped with honey—and every word that God spoke to us, when we were here below, shall come back to us with matchless sweetness as we remember it in the world to come.

II. But now, secondly, take the text not only with its two notes of admiration, but as **A STATEMENT**, a cool statement of matters of fact.

David is one who, when his heart boils with holy fervor, and his hand wields the pen of a ready writer, still writes accurately. He never speaks more than the truth even when he is most emphatic, so that I am sure that David means to tell us here that God’s words were sweet to him.

First, *they were unutterably sweet*. “How sweet!” But he does not tell us how sweet they were. He says, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste!” as if he could not tell us what delightfulness he found in the teachings of God’s word—it was unutterable. We can tell you, dear hearers, that God’s words of promise are very, very sweet, but we can convey to you no sort of idea of how great that sweetness is.

Oh, taste for yourselves and see that the Lord is good! There is no describing the flavors of a royal banquet, there is no picturing to a man who has not the sense of smell the fragrance of a delicious perfume. And you must personally know the sweetness of the word of God, for to us it is positively unutterable.

This much, however, the psalmist does utter. He tells us that God’s words are *surpassingly sweet*, for says he, “They are sweeter than honey.” Honey is supposed to be the sweetest of all known substances. So David means that, if there is anything that can delight the heart of man, God’s word could charm his

heart better than that. David means that if there is anything that could cheer a man, God's word could comfort him better than any other consolation.

If there be joy, if there be peace, if there be rest, if there be bliss, to be found in anything else—all that, and more than that—can be found in a higher degree in the teachings of God's word and in the blessings of the covenant of grace. Sweeter than sweetness itself, sweeter than the sweetest thing that God Himself has made, is God's word which He has spoken. Oh, that we did but know how to taste it!

The psalmist also makes this statement, that *all God's words are thus unutterably sweet to him*. He does not say that they are so to all men, but he says, "How sweet are thy words unto *my* taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to *my* mouth!" He speaks thus of all God's words.

We know some people who love God's promises, but they do not care much about His precepts. If God speaks a word of grace, they like that. But if it is a word of command, they do not care about that. Oh, brothers and sisters, I hope we have a taste for every word that God has spoken! A man ought not to say, "I do not like a sermon from the Old Testament as much as I do a sermon from the New Testament." There must be no picking and choosing with God's word. It is virtually atheism when men begin to set one word of God over against another, for the man who dares to criticize God's revelation makes himself greater than God—and therein he has undified the deity, and there is no God to him.

My God is such to me that if I know a word to be inspired by His Spirit, I value it beyond all conception. It is not for me to say, "This word of my Master is nothing compared with another word." All these words came from the same mouth, and coming from the same mouth, they are all equally true to me. And if not all alike rich in comfort, yet "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

From one end of it to the other, it answers some divine purpose—and who am I that I should sit in judgment upon it? I pray you, brethren and sisters, value every word of God, and let no man lead you into the error of setting this one above the other, for if they are God's words, they are all precious—and you ought to count them so.

David seems to imply that *God's words were precious to him at all times*. They were sweet to him when he wrote the text—I cannot tell in what condition of body and mind he was at that time—but this I do know, lying upon the bed of sickness, racked with pain, many of God's saints have said, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste!"

And this also I do know that, lifted up with gratitude for the blessings of providence—health, wealth, friends—yet God's saints have found greater sweetness in His word than in all temporal things and they have still said, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste!" This is an abiding mark of a child of God, that God's words are sweet to him, ay, sometimes very sweet even when he is half afraid to partake of them!

"Oh," says he "would God they were mine. I want nothing sweeter than God's word, and even if I am a little fearful of appropriating it to myself, yet still it is very, very dear to me." If the name of Jesus is sweeter than honey to your taste, then be glad, for this is a mark of a child of God that never failed yet—and never will fail while the world stands.

III. Now, thirdly, look at the text again and you will see that it contains A REPETITION—"How sweet are thy words unto my taste!"

Well, that is all right, David—we understand you. "Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Why do you want to say that? Is not that saying the same thing twice? Yes, and intentionally so, because God's word is sweet to His people in many ways and many times over.

As I have already said to you, it is very sweet in its *reception*. When we first take it into our heart and feed upon it, it is very precious, but spiritually, men are something like ruminating animals—they have the power of feeding again, and again, and again—on that which they have once received. See how the cattle lie down and chew the cud. And it is when they chew the cud, I suppose, that they get the sweetness out of that which they have eaten.

And so, spiritually, when men have once received Christ, they get increasing sweetness out of Him by *meditation*. Having taken Him into their souls, they afterwards inwardly digest the precious word,

and get the secret juice and latent sweetesses out of the promises of God's most holy revelation and out of Jesus Christ Himself. It is thus that the psalmist first says, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste!" And then he rolls them around again in his mouth by meditation, and so he repeats himself as he says, "Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

But do you not think that the repetition in the text means something else, namely, that while, first of all, Christ's word is very sweet to our taste, there is another sweetness when we get it into our mouth—not so much for our own eating as speaking of it to others? There is great sweetness about the *declaration* of God's words.

Some of you who love the Lord have never yet told anybody. You are secret Christians—you hide away behind pillar and post. Oh, but God's word is very sweet to you, you say, as you eat your morsel of bread in the corner! So it is, but you would have another and a greater sweetness if you would come out and avow that you love the Lord. I am sure you would.

In fact, there is many a child of God who never does enjoy the full sweetness of religion, because he has not had the courage to confess Christ before men. I wish that some of you halting ones, you who are much afraid and fearing, would obey the whole of the Gospel. You know the Gospel—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Now, obey the whole of the Gospel and then you shall get the whole of its sweetness. But mayhap, there is some peculiar flavor in the word which you have never known as yet, because you have been disobedient children. Did you ever notice that saying of our Lord, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Yes, you know all about that, you say. Christ says to you, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

Now go a little farther—what is the next verse? "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest." Why, that is another rest! I thought you had rest—did not Jesus say that He would give you rest? Yet in the next verse He says, "Ye shall find rest." Yes, that is another rest, a still deeper one, which you find when you willingly take Christ's yoke upon you, and become His disciples, learning of Him. So I believe my text means just that. God's word is very sweet to the taste when you receive it by faith, but it has another, and a special and deeper sweetness when you bring it into your mouth and confess Christ before men.

And let me add to this that there is a very special sweetness about preaching Christ—in the public *proclamation* of His Word. It may be that some brother here has the gift of speech, but has never used it for his Master. Let me put in my witness here. God's Word has been unutterably sweet to my own heart, as I have believed it—it has been remarkably precious to me as I have confessed it as a Christian man—but still there is a something, I cannot tell you what, of singular delight about the preaching of this Word.

Oh, sometimes, when I have prepared my sermon, it has been bitter in my belly, but it has been as honey in my mouth when I have preached it to the great congregation gathered here! If I might choose my destiny, and if I had even to stay out of heaven for the purpose, it would be heaven to me to be permitted to always be preaching Christ and the glories of His salvation. And I do not know that I should have any choice between that and heaven.

If I might be privileged to be, without ceasing, lauding and praising and extolling that dear Word of God—the Christ who was born at Bethlehem. If I might tell out to sinners everywhere that God is in him making reconciliation, nay, that He has made reconciliation for all who believe in Him, this might be heaven enough, at least for one poor heart, world without end.

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Try, brother, whether it will not sweeten your mouth if you begin to preach Christ. Perhaps you have been too quiet and too silent. Get up and speak for Jesus, and see whether the honey does not come into your mouth at once.

In the olden times they pictured the orator with bees buzzing round his lips, storing up the honey that dropped from his sweet utterances. This may be but a fable concerning the human talker, but certainly it is true of the man who preaches Christ—that his lips drop honey, and the more he speaks of his dear Lord and Master, and the less he tries, with human eloquence, to magnify himself—the more of sacred sweetness shall there be in every word that he utters.

So I think I have accounted for the repetition, have I not? It is no repetition after all. At least, it is no tautology—it is only a right and necessary repetition.

IV. And now I am going to wind up, in the fourth place, with AN EXAMINATION—the examination of everybody here present tonight. It is the close of the year and one may not object to a few personal inquiries at such a time.

The first and chief inquiry is this—Are God's words sweet to me? Is Christ Himself the Master-Word of God, the *Logos*, is He sweet to me? For, if not, what is the reason?

First, may it be that I have no taste? *Have I spiritual taste?* It would be a sad thing to be wholly without natural taste. I do know one such person, who has no taste at all. The poet Wordsworth was for years without the power of smell. His was a very remarkable case, with a mind so dainty, so delicate, so beautiful. Once upon a time, for a very short season, the power of smell came to him among the heather, and you know how every primrose by the river's brim had words for Wordsworth, and did talk with him—and when the sweet perfume came from the dear May flowers, the poet was quite enraptured, as if he had for a little while entered into heaven. But the power of smell soon went away and he was again unhappily bereft of it. The richest flower, the sweetest shrub, could be nothing to the man whose nostril was not sensitive to its perfume.

And what if that should be so with me spiritually? Perhaps, my dear hearer, you have heard all we have been saying about Christ and you have heard many rich and rare hymns about Him. But you never felt that there was any sweetness in Him. Then I beg you to inquire whether you may not be lacking in a sense which others have.

If a person were to say to me, "How lovely is that Italian sky! What a deep blue it has!" and if I turned my face that way and said, "I see nothing at all." If, when he pointed to the sea, or to the green fields, I looked in that direction, and saw nothing, what should I infer? Why, that he possessed a power called sight, which I did not possess! Of course, I might be foolish enough to say, "There is no blue sky. There is no such thing. There are no green fields. There is no ocean. There is no sun. I am sure there is not, for I never saw them."

One day I saw a man sitting at a table with his napkin under his chin, enjoying his dinner, and he overheard an observation that I made about a sinner, and he said, "I never had a spiritual sensation in my life and I do not believe that there is anything spiritual in this world." Now, if I had been standing near a sty and a pig had made that observation, I should not have contradicted him—and I did not contradict this man—for I thought that he spoke the truth. I believed that he had never experienced a spiritual sensation in his life.

And when some men say, "I perceive no sweetness in Christ, and therefore, there is none," I wish that they would draw another inference—"Therefore I have not that taste which would enable me to perceive His sweetness"—for that is the truth. A man who has never been born again is dead as to all spiritual things and he cannot hear, or see, or taste anything that is spiritual. He is not alive unto God as yet.

I put this solemn inquiry to everyone who says, "I see no beauty in Christ"—may it not be that you have no eyes? If you say, "I hear no music in His voice. In fact, I do not hear that voice," may it not be that your ears are sealed? And if you say, "I taste no sweetness in the Word of God or the Christ of God," may it not be that you are still dead in trespasses and sins? If so, may God quicken you in His infinite mercy!

Still, there is another answer to the question which I beg to put by way of examination. If the Word of God is not very sweet to me, *have I an appetite?* Solomon says, "The full soul loatheth an

honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." Ah, when a soul is full of itself, and of the world, and of the pleasures of sin, I do not wonder that it sees no sweetness in Christ, for it has no appetite!

Oh, but when a soul is emptied, when a soul hungers and thirsts after God, when it is conscious of its wants and miseries, as I hope some here present are, then is Christ sweet indeed! O hungry ones, take Him into your souls, suck down His precious word! Christ has come on purpose to feed hungry spirits. If you want Him, you may have Him—and the more you want Him, the more free He is to you—and the more freely may you partake of Him. He is just such a Christ as you want. May God make you ravenous after Him—so ravenous that you may never rest till you have received Him as altogether your own!

Yet still there is another answer. If I do not taste sweetness in Christ, *am I in health?* When a man is ill, his soul "abhorreth all manner of meat." Nothing tastes nice to a man whose palate is out of order through sickness. Now, does it happen, tonight, that some of you do not feel any joy in Christ? Then you are ill, brother. Put out your tongue, let us look at it. Ah, it has got furred up with the world, I am sure!

Something ails you if Christ is not sweet. Sometimes, you have sat in these pews, some of you, and you have heard Christ preached till you hardly knew how to keep your seats. You have been ready to stand up and clap your hands to the praise of His dear name—but now you do not feel anything at all. You can almost go to sleep, if you do not actually slumber.

The preacher is quite willing to share the blame with you, for he is not all he ought to be. But he does not mean to take all the blame of it, for as far as he knows how, he preaches the same Savior now as ever, and tries to preach Him with as much earnestness as ever. May it not be possible, brother or sister, that you are not quite right spiritually, that you are getting ill, that your heart is growing feeble? Go home and pray the Lord to set you right. Oh, that He would cleanse you, and purify you, make you yet to be strong and vigorous—and then this would be one of the first tokens of it—that Christ would once more become inexpressibly sweet to you!

I must also get you to ask yourself this question—*Have I savored the world or sin?* People sometimes lose their appetite for sweetness by eating something sour. You may have had one flavor in your mouth, but when you have eaten something with a different flavor, you cannot taste the first. If a man gets fond of the leeks, and the garlic, and the onions of Egypt—strong things those—if he once gets the savor of them into his mouth, he is not likely to have any very dainty tooth for the precious things of God.

Spiritual flavors have need of great spirituality to enjoy them, I know not what other word to use. They need that the palate be kept clean, for otherwise, if the world is sweet to us, if sin has any hold upon us—to that extent and degree shall we be incapable of appreciating the sweet things of God.

This is my last question—*Have I habituated myself to this food?* All earthly sweetness cloys—he who eats honey for a long while will care no more for honey. But it is very different with the Christ of God. The sweetness of Christ is not fully known except to those who have known Him long, who by reason of constant use have had their senses fully exercised. There is none so greedy after Christ as the man who has had most of Him.

Paul had been a believer at least fifteen years and yet he said this was his ambition, "That I may know him." Had he not known Christ before? Yes, but the more he knew Him, the more he longed to know Him. Come, brother, if you do not taste the sweetness of Christ tonight in the preaching of the word, surely it must be because you have not of late been feeding upon Him. Make haste and come along—and let your soul be filled with Him, even from this glad hour.

I have done when I have reminded those here present who see no sweetness in the words of God, that there is a time coming when they will be compelled to hear the word of God in a very different way from that in which they hear it tonight. One of the first works of the resurrection will be the creation of the ear. I do not know by what process we shall be raised from the dead, except that the Lord Jesus said this, "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the

resurrection of damnation.” When the voice of the Son of God shall strike upon that ear of yours, what a sensation it will cause! God has spoken to you now by the voice of one like yourself and He has spoken according to the printed page—and you have chosen not to hear it.

But when, in that last day, He shall speak by the angel’s trumpet and by the voice of His Son, you will be obliged to hear, and rising from your grave, bursting your cerements, you must obey, and you must stand—willing or unwilling—before that last dread tribunal, to answer for every deed done in the body, for every idle word that you have spoken, ay, and for every thought that you have imagined against the Most High God!

It may be a thousand years before that will happen, it may be ten thousand years, I cannot tell, but it will happen in God’s time—and that space between will be but as the twinkling of an eye—and there will you be before the face of the great Judge and you will not be able to say with David, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste!” but you will cry out, in the agony of your spirit, “Oh, the gall and wormwood!”

Oh, the fire that shall burn into your very soul when God shall say, “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but you have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.” “Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

God grant that you may not be bidden so to depart. And that you may not, I pray you to now to listen to the voice of God, which bids you trust Jesus and live! I can only speak with these poor feeble lips and there is no power in anything that I can say—but God the Holy Ghost can speak with irresistible might to your hearts and constrain you to taste of Christ tonight by hearing the word of God in your very soul.

I pray that He may do it, for His dear name’s sake! Amen and Amen

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 119:89-112

89. *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*

Other things come, and go, and change, moons wax and wane, tides ebb and flow, everything earthly is changeable; but “Thy word is settled—settled in heaven,” with the eternal settlements. No truth of it can fail, no promise of it can be broken. What a joy this is to our hearts tonight! There is something sure, after all, “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”

90. *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.*

That is, God has spoken to nature, and that word has established the earth, and made it to stand securely.

91. *They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.*

It was God’s word that made the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and it is God’s word that bids creation still exist. And that is the almighty word upon which you and I are resting, if we are truly trusting in the living God.

*“His very word of grace is strong
As that which built the skies;
The voice that rolls the stars along
Speaks all the promises.”*

92. *Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.*

Let us remember how God's Word has kept some of us alive when we had nothing else to live upon. Hope would have quite failed, and we should have been driven to despair, if it had not been for the precious, priceless Word of God.

93. *I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.*

Nothing sharpens the memory like having been quickened. If we have been at death's door, and the Word of God has brought us renewed life, we shall never forget it.

94-96. *I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies. I have seen an end of all perfection:*

No matter who it is that boasts of being perfect, "I have seen an end of all perfection."

96. *But thy commandment —*

There lies the perfection—

96. *Is exceeding broad.*

Covering the whole life, covering the thoughts, the intents, the desires of the inner and secret nature.

97-98. *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.*

If we have God's law always with us, we shall be wiser than the most crafty of our enemies, for after all, there is nothing that puzzles and baffles cunning men like simple honesty. Do that which is right and you will cut through the nets in which men would entangle you. They cannot trip you up if your feet are settled in God's ways.

99-100. *I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.*

There is more wisdom in obeying God than in all the ethics of heathen philosophers. It matters not whence they take their precepts and maxims, there is no wisdom like yielding one's heart to God.

101-104. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*

The man who cannot hate does not love, but he who loves that which is right, is by no means indifferent to the wrong and to the false. He hates it, and the more intensely he loves God, and loves right, the more intensely does he hate every false way. Especially does he hate it in himself. Oh, to be delivered altogether from every trace of falsehood!

105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

It shows me the way. It cheers me in the way. It reveals to me the difficulties of the way.

106-107. *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.*

Are any of you afflicted tonight? I commend this prayer to your use. One would have expected that David would have prayed, "I am afflicted very much: comfort me, O Lord." Or, "Relieve me, O Lord." Instead of praying so, he cries, "Quicken me, O LORD," and he did well. Let us imitate him, for if we get more spiritual light and life, we shall, by that means, get more comfort, and the trouble from which we are suffering will soon cease to vex our spirit.

108-112. *Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments. My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law. The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.*

Oh, that every one of us might be able to make this declaration of the psalmist our own! God grant it, for Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—1038, 119, 786

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